

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /006 R

DRAFTED BY: S/S-O: PSHANKLE

APPROVED BY: S/S-O: PSHANKLE

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P 201006Z DEC 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 277676

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 277676 ACTION MOSCOW 19 DEC 74

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UNCLAS STATE 277676

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, US, UR

SUBJECT: TRANSCRIPT OF DEPARTMENT NEWS BRIEFING

FOLLOWING IS TRANSCRIPT OF DEPARTMENT NEWS BRIEFING,
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1974 4:10 PM:

BEGIN TEXT

MR. ANDERSON: I HAVE A BRIEF STATEMENT TO GIVE YOU.

THE PRIVATE COMMUNICATION FROM FOREIGN MINISTER
GROMYKO TO SECRETARY KISSINGER OF OCTOBER 26, WHICH WAS
PUBLISHED BY TASS TODAY, DOES NOT IN OUR VIEW CHANGE THE
UNDERSTANDINGS REFERRED TO IN THE SECRETARY'S LETTER TO
SENATOR JACKSON OF OCTOBER 18.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ALWAYS MADE CLEAR -- MOST
RECENTLY IN SECRETARY KISSINGER'S TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE
FINANCE COMMITTEE ON THE TRADE BILL -- THAT THERE EXISTS
NO UNDERSTANDING OR AGREEMENT EITHER WITH THE SOVIET
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GOVERNMENT OR WITH SENATOR JACKSON CONCERNING NUMBERS OF

EMIGRANTS FROM THE SOVIET UNION.

THAT'S THE END OF THE STATEMENT.

Q. BOB, WAS THE LETTER RELEASED WITH THE
KNOWLEDGE OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT?

A. NO, IT WAS NOT.

Q. CAME AS A SURPRISE?

A. YES.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECULATION OR ANY GUIDANCE
ON WHY THEY RELEASED IT NOW?

A. I DON'T WANT TO SPECULATE ON WHY THE SOVIET
GOVERNMENT CHOSE TO RELEASE THE LETTER.

Q. BOB, DO I GET A FLAVOR IN HERE OF UNHAPPINESS
THAT A PRIVATE COMMUNICATION HAS BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND
MORE OR LESS LEAKED?

A. ON THAT, SPENCE, LET ME JUST LEAVE IT THAT
WE WERE SURPRISED THAT THIS PRIVATE COMMUNICATION WAS
RELEASED.

Q. BOB, HAS THERE BEEN ANY COMMUNICATION DIRECTLY
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS APART FROM THIS?

A. I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR QUESTION.

Q. HAS THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATED TO
YOU ON THIS ISSUE APART FROM THE RELEASE OF THIS LETTER
OR THE TASS STATEMENT?

A. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, NO.

Q. ON THIS SUBJECT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT?

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A. YES.

Q. DO YOU SEE ANY POSSIBLE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE
FACT THAT THIS ALL OCCURRED AFTER SENATOR JACKSON LAST
FRIDAY, IN A VERY LENGTHY EXPLANATION OF HIS VERSION
OF WHAT THE AMENDMENT MEANT, ASKED THAT IT BE TRANS-
MITTED BY VOICE OF AMERICA AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY BROAD-
CAST IN ENGLISH, RUSSIAN AND SEVERAL OTHER LANGUAGES,

SATURATED THE SOVIET UNION?

I'M JUST WONDERING IF YOU DON'T THINK THE RUSSIANS
MORE OR LESS HAD TO SAY SOMETHING.

A. WELL, HERE AGAIN, STU, YOU'RE ASKING ME TO
SPECULATE ON WHY THE SOVIETS CHOSE TO RELEASE FOREIGN
MINISTER GROMYKO'S LETTER. AND, AS I SAID EARLIER,
I THINK IT'S BETTER FOR ME NOT TO SPECULATE ON THAT.

Q. BOB, REGARDING YOUR SECOND SENTENCE WHERE YOU
SAY THERE WAS NO UNDERSTANDING OR AGREEMENT CONCERNING
NUMBERS OF EMIGRANTS, WAS THERE AN UNDERSTANDING THAT
THERE WOULD BE AN INCREASE, WITHOUT AN UNDERSTANDING
ON SPECIFIC NUMBERS?

A. I THINK ON THAT I WANT TO REFER YOU BACK TO
A WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT. AS I RECALL, IT WAS ISSUED ON
OCTOBER 21 IN THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS OFFICE IN TUCSON,
ARIZONA. IT WAS WHEN THE PRESIDENT WAS SEEING THE
PRESIDENT OF MEXICO. AND THAT POINT WAS ADDRESSED THERE
ON THE NUMBERS QUESTION.

AND THE SECRETARY, AS YOU KNOW, ALSO IN HIS TESTI-
MONY BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE WENT INTO THAT
IN GREAT DETAIL IN HIS STATEMENT AS WELL AS IN ANSWER
TO QUESTIONS. BUT WE HAVE THE STATEMENT HERE.

Q. IS THERE ANY QUARREL NOW, BOB, WITH
SENATOR JACKSON'S PRESS BRIEFING AT THE WHITE HOUSE
AFTER MEETING WITH KISSINGER AND THE PRESIDENT CONCERNING
THE 60,000 BENCHMARK FIGURE -- I THINK IT WAS 60,000?

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A. WELL, I THINK ON THE QUESTION OF THE 60,000
FIGURE THAT, FRANKLY, THE SECRETARY HAS EITHER ADDRESSED
HIMSELF TO THAT QUESTION A NUMBER OF TIMES AND I THINK
HAS MADE THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION VERY, VERY CLEAR
ON THE QUESTION OF NUMBERS.

Q. BOB, DOES THE PUBLICATION OF THIS LETTER IN
ANY WAY CHANGE THE SECRETARY'S OPTIMISM THAT A TRADE
BILL WILL BE ENACTED?

A. WELL, LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY. THE SECRETARY
AND THE ENTIRE ADMINISTRATION CERTAINLY HOPE THAT THE
CONGRESS WILL PASS THE TRADE BILL, WHICH, AS WE ALL KNOW,
IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECES OF
LEGISLATION CURRENTLY BEFORE THE CONGRESS.

Q. WELL, THE SECRETARY IN HIS DECEMBER 3 APPEARANCE BEFORE THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ANSWERED -- CONFIRMED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL -- THE VERY POINTS WHICH GROMYKO EXPRESSED IN THE LETTER HE HANDED TO THE SECRETARY

OCTOBER 26, CONFIRMING THE FACT THAT IF YOU ANNOUNCE AN AGREEMENT YOU WOULD BLOW THE WHOLE THING. SO I CAN'T SEE THAT IT MAKES MUCH DIFFERENCE WHETHER GROMYKO'S LETTER WAS MADE PUBLIC OR NOT. IT SIMPLY BACKS UP WHAT THE SECRETARY TOLD THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE. AND THE ATMOSPHERICS OF THE WHOLE THING HAS GONE BEYOND CREDIBILITY ANYWAY.

WHAT I AM TRYING TO SAY IS THAT EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT THERE'S PROPAGANDA BACK AND FORTH BUT BENEATH IT AN UNDERSTANDING IS GOING TO BE OPERATIVE. IS THAT RIGHT -- YES, NO, OR NO COMMENT?

A. WELL, HERE AGAIN I JUST DON'T WANT TO SPECULATE AND GO MUCH BEYOND THE STATEMENT THAT WE'VE ISSUED. I THINK WHAT YOU HAVE SAID WITH REGARD TO THE SECRETARY'S DECEMBER 3 STATEMENT IS VERY ACCURATE. AND I WOULD JUST RATHER LEAVE IT THERE.

Q. BOB, CAN YOU SAY THIS? HAS THE SECRETARY
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SINCE THIS DEVELOPMENT BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MR. DOBRYNIN? AND, SECONDLY, WAS THE GROMYKO LETTER AS HE RECEIVED IT MADE KNOWN IN FULL TO MESSRS. JACKSON, RIBICOFF, AND JAVITS?

AA. WELL, ON THE QUESTION OF THE LETTER BEING SHOWN TO THE SENATORS BEFORE IT WAS PUBLISHED, WE FELT THAT WE COULD NOT RELEASE A PRIVATE COMMUNICATION FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO THE SECRETARY. NEVERTHELESS, THE ESSENCE OF THE LETTER; I.E., OF FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO'S LETTER, WAS REFLECTED IN THE SECRETARY'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

ON YOUR FIRST QUESTION, WHICH I DID NOT ANSWER, I WOULD LIKE TO LOOK INTO THAT TO SEE WHETHER THE SECRETARY HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN, AND I WILL GET BACK RIGHT AWAY.

Q. THANK YOU, ROBERT.

END TEXT KISSINGER
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE277676
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O: PSHANKLE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741217/aaaaaoba.tel
Line Count: 223
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 OCT 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 OCT 2002 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <02 JAN 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRANSCRIPT OF DEPARTMENT NEWS BRIEFING
TAGS: OGEN, US, UR
To: LENINGRAD
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005